

REMARKS

Preliminary Matters and Status of the Application

First, Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claim 3, though currently objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant further thanks the Examiner for indicating that all certified copies of the priority documents have been received. Applicant notes that the Examiner has not indicated whether or not the drawings have been accepted. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate acceptance of the drawings in the next Office communication.

The Specification has been objected to for alleged informalities.

Prior to entry of the present Amendment, claims 1-6 were all the claims pending in the Application. After entry of the present Amendment, claims 1, 2 and 4-6 will be all the claims pending in the Application. Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 3. Accordingly, claim 3 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1-6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. Claims 1 and 2 have been further rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Japanese Publication 04-118305 (hereinafter “the JP ‘305 reference”), in view of U.S. Patent 6,036,800 to Corvasce et al. (hereinafter “Corvasce”), in further view of U.S. Patent 3,759,306 to Greiner et al. (hereinafter “Greiner”), in even further view of U.S. Patent 5,718,782 to Fourgon (hereinafter “Fourgon”). Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) under the art as applied above to claims 1 and 2, in further view of Japanese Publication 05-301507 (hereinafter “the JP ‘507 reference”). Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the art as applied to claims 1 and 2 above, in further view Japanese Publication 56-079004 (hereinafter “the JP ‘004 reference”).

The presented Amendment addresses each of the above-noted grounds of objection and rejection. No other grounds of rejection or objection have been presented.

Objections to the Specification

The Specification has been objected to for alleged informalities. Applicant respectfully traverses the objection. Nevertheless, the Specification has been amended as set forth above. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection be withdrawn.

Objections to the Claims

Claim 3 has been objected to as depending from a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Per this Amendment, Applicant has cancelled claim 3 without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the objection is moot.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

After the cancellation of claim 3, claims 1, 2 and 4-6 currently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly failing to particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Nevertheless, the claims have been amended as set forth above, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the JP '305 reference in view of Corvasce, in further view of Griener, and even further in view of Fourgon. Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) under the art as applied above to claims 1 and 2, in further view of the JP '507 reference. Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the art as applied to claims 1 and 2 above, in further view of the JP '004 reference.

Without conceding the rejections, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 3. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 1 patentably

distinguishes over the cited art. Applicant further submits that claims 2 and 4-6 patentably distinguish over the cited art due *at least* to their dependence on claim 1.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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